# ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

## Education

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AS AN ASSOCIATE OF EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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**ABSTRACT**

The study aims to find out the association between socio-economic status (SES) of the family and emotional competence (EC) of secondary school students by taking the construct as a whole and in terms of of its component factors. The cross-sectional study collected data from a stratified random sample of 866 students from the secondary schools of Ernakulam and Thrissur districts (Kerala, India), representing the population of adolescents in the age range 13-15, studying in the secondary classes (Std. VIII to X) of schools affiliated to the Board of Public Examinations, Govt. of Kerala. Data were collected by administering the Emotional Competence Scale for Secondary School Pupils (Rekha & Salim Kumar, 2015) and the Socio-Economic Status Scale (Usha & Vijayan, 2014). Chi-square test of association was employed to analyse the data inferentially. The result revealed the presence of significant association between SES of the family and emotional competence in total and two of the constituent factors of EC, viz., self-awareness and relationship management.

## INTRODUCTION

The ability to manage one's emotions in sociocultural milieu is an important factor in the psycho-social development and wellbeing of adolescents in our secondary schools. This ability, often termed as emotional competence, involves a set of personal skills to recognize, interpret, and respond positively to emotions in oneself and others. The importance of emotional competence in life skills development and psychological wellbeing of adolescents has been emphasized by many researchers (e.g., Roy & Priya, 2018; Masrat, Wani & Alam, 2015; Lau & Wu, 2012).The decisive influence of genetic and environmental forces in emotional development during childhood and adolescence is undisputable (Takahashi, Pease, Pingault & Viding, 2021; Schapira, Anger Elfenbein, Amichay-Setter, Zahn-Waxler, & Knafo-Noam, 2019; Wang & Saudino, 2013). Among the environmental factors influencing emotional development of children, those associated with the family are perhaps the most influential.

Family is a primary socialization agency and considered as an important factor influencing the child's emotional development (Ozcinar, 2006). Family cohesion and supportive relationships among family members are critical factors in the development of children's emotional competence (Morris, Silk, Steinberg, Myers & Robinson, 2007; Sibia, Misra & Srivastava, 2004). Family socialization shapes children's expression and regulation of emotion in two ways. The first involves parents' immediate responses toward their children. The second source of emotion socialization in the family involves the more general emotional climate to which the child is exposed. Among the family related factors that affect the emotion socialization of children, socio-economic status (SES) of the family is critical. This is because high SES families afford their children an array of services, goods, parental actions, and social connections that potentially contribute to the benefit of children and a concern that many low SES children lack access to those same resources and experiences, thus putting them at risk for problems associated with the development of emotions (Schreuder, 2010; Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). However, the relationship between SES of the family and emotional competence of children and adolescents are not very clear from the literature, nor it much explored. In this context, it is of research interest to find out the how socio-economic status of the the family is associated with emotional competence of adolescent learners of Kerala, a state which is facing dramatic social and economic changes.

## OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To find out the association between socio-economic status of the family and emotional competence of secondary school students.

## HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

The following null hypotheses were tested for the study:

$H_o1$: There is no significant relationship between socio-economic status and self-awareness aspect of the emotional competence of secondary school students.

$H_o2$: There is no significant relationship between socio-economic status and self-management aspect of the emotional competence of secondary school students.

$H_o3$: There is no significant relationship between socio-economic status and social awareness aspect of the emotional competence of secondary school students.

$H_o4$: There is no significant relationship between socio-economic status and relationship management aspect of the emotional competence of secondary school students.

$H_o5$: There is no significant association between socio-economic status and emotional competence of secondary school students.

## METHODOLOGY

### Method

Normative survey method was adopted for the study.

### Population

The secondary school students in the age range 13-15, studying in the secondary classes (Std. VIII to X) of a school where the state syllabus prescribed by the Govt. of Kerala is following, constitute the population for the study.

### Sample

A representative group of 866 secondary school students were selected using proportionate stratified random sampling technique constituted the sample for the study.

### Tools Used

a) Emotional Competence Scale for Secondary School Pupils: Emotional Competence (EC) of the participants was measured by administering the Emotional Competence Scale for Secondary School Pupils (ECSP) developed by Rekha & Salim Kumar (2015). It is a standardized, 80 item five-point Likert-type scale covering suggested four major domains, viz., Self-Awareness, Self- management, Social Awareness, and Relationship Management. The ECSP has a criterion validity of 0.74 and test-retest reliability of 0.76.

b) Socio-Economic Status Scale: The socio-economic status of the participants was measured by employing the Socio-

Economic Status Scale (SESS) developed by Usha and Vijayan (2014). This scale assesses the SES of the family of a participant in terms of the education, profession and annual income of parents.

**Procedure**
The tools were administered on the sample in classroom situation under standardized conditions, their responses were collected in the response sheets, and the total scores on the ECSP and SESS were found out separately. A personal data sheet was also attached with the tools, so as to collect the required demographic information. The data thus obtained were subjected to appropriate statistical techniques and interpreted accordingly. The data were analysed inferentially with the help of SPSS by employing Chi-square test of association.

**Analysis And Interpretation**
The association between emotional competence of the secondary school students and socio-economic status (SES) of their family were ascertained by employing the Chi-square test of association by taking the total score as well as the scores of different aspects of emotional competence. The analysis performed are presented under appropriate sub-headings:

1) Association between SES and Self-awareness component of EC
The association between socio-economic status and self-awareness component of the EC were find out by employing Chi-square test of association. The data and result of the analysis is given in Table 1.

**Table 1: Chi-square test of association between SES and Self-awareness**

| | | Self-awareness | | | Total | $\chi 2$ | df | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Average | High | Low | | | | |
| SES | Average | 350 | 94 | 120 | 564 | 15.140 | 4 | .004 |
| | High | 82 | 40 | 22 | 144 | | | |
| | Low | 101 | 19 | 38 | 158 | | | |
| | Total | 533 | 153 | 180 | 866 | | | |

The chi-square test of association between socio-economic status of the family and self-awareness aspect of emotional competence produced a $\chi^2$-value which is significant at 99% confidence interval ($\chi^2$ = 15.140; 4 df, p<.001). It shows that socio-economic status and self-awareness are associated.

2) Association Between SES And Self-management Component Of EC
The data and result of the Chi-square test of association between socio-economic status and self-management component of EC is given in Table 2.

**Table 2: Chi-square test of association between SES and Self-management**

| | | Self-management | | | Total | $\chi 2$ | df | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Average | High | Low | | | | |
| SES | Average | 370 | 102 | 92 | 564 | 7.728 | 4 | .102 |
| | High | 100 | 22 | 22 | 144 | | | |
| | Low | 97 | 22 | 39 | 158 | | | |
| | Total | 567 | 146 | 153 | 866 | | | |

The chi-square obtained on associating the socio-economic status and self-management component of emotional competence is not large enough to be significant at least at 95% confidence interval ($^2$ = 7.728; 4 df, p>.05). It shows that there is no true relationship between socio-economic status and self-management aspect of their emotional competence.

3) Association between SES and Social-awareness component of EC
The result of the Chi-square test of association between socio-economic status and social-awareness component of

emotional competence is given in Table 3.

**Table 3: Chi-square test of association between SES and social-awareness component of EC**

| | | Social Awareness | | | Total | $\chi 2$ | df | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Average | High | Low | | | | |
| SES | Average | 370 | 111 | 83 | 564 | 7.603 | 4 | .107 |
| | High | 91 | 25 | 28 | 144 | | | |
| | Low | 91 | 30 | 37 | 158 | | | |
| | Total | 552 | 166 | 148 | 866 | | | |

The chi-square value estimated on associating socio-economic status and social awareness component of emotional competence of secondary school students is not significant ($\chi^2$ = 7.603; 4 df, p>.05). It shows that there is no true association between socio-economic status and social awareness of secondary school students.

4) Association between SES and Relationship Management component of EC
Table 4 presents the data and result of the Chi-square test performed to find out the association between between socio-economic status and relationship management component of emotional competence of secondary school students.

**Table 4: Chi-square test of association between SES and relationship management component of EC**

| | | Relationship Management | | | Total | $\chi 2$ | df | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Average | High | Low | | | | |
| SES | Average | 374 | 98 | 92 | 564 | 12.821 | 4 | .012 |
| | High | 109 | 23 | 12 | 144 | | | |
| | Low | 104 | 19 | 35 | 158 | | | |
| | Total | 587 | 140 | 139 | 866 | | | |

The chi-square test of association between socio-economic status and relationship management aspect of emotional competence produced a $\chi^2$ value which is significant at 99% confidence interval ($\chi^2$ = 12.821; 4 df, p<.01). It exposes that there exists a true association between socio-economic status and relationship management of secondary school students.

5) Association between Socio-Economic Status and Emotional Competence
The association between socio-economic status and emotional competence as a whole were find out by employing chi-square test of association, the data and result find out the same is given in Table 5.

**Table 5: Chi-square test of association between SES and EC**

| | | Emotional Competence | | | Total | $\chi 2$ | df | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Average | High | Low | | | | |
| SES | Average | 353 | 113 | 98 | 564 | 15.350 | 4 | .004 |
| | High | 101 | 27 | 16 | 144 | | | |
| | Low | 93 | 22 | 43 | 158 | | | |
| | Total | 547 | 162 | 157 | 866 | | | |

The chi-square test of association performed to find out the relationship between socio-economic status and emotional competence of secondary school students resulted in a $\chi^2$ value which is significant at 99% confidence interval ($\chi^2$ = 15.350; 4 df, p<.01). It shows that the two factors, socio-economic status and emotional competence, are significantly associated.

**CONCLUSION**
The result of the study exposed that socio-economic status of the family is significantly associated with emotional competence of secondary school students. The observed association is the contribution of self-awareness and relationship management components of emotional competence. The other two components of emotional

competence, viz., self-management and social awareness, was not significantly associated with socio-economic status of the family. The null hypotheses formulated, viz., $H_0 1$, $H_0 4$, and $H_0 5$, are, therefore, rejected and the null hypotheses $H_0 2$ and $H_0 3$ are accepted.

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